Annual Report

For the year July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000
Second Annual Report

Prince Edward Island Seniors Advisory Council

Prince Edward Island
CANADA

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Table of Contents

Letter of Transmittal 3

Message from the Chair 4

Work of the Council 5

Members Handbook 6

Seniors Web Site 6

Community Consultation 8

a) First Community Consultation - Wellington, November 16, 1999
b) Second Community Consultation - Montague, December 7, 1999
c) Third Community Consultation - Kingsboro, April 11, 2000
d) Fourth Community Consultation - Mill River, May 9, 2000

Educational Activities 9

Community Involvement 10

Conclusions 12

Appendix

A. Council Members 1999 - 2000 13

B. Declaration on The Rights and Responsibilities of Older Persons 14

C. Declaration of Intergenerational Week—May 29 to June 4 18

Prince Edward Island Seniors Advisory Council
PO Box 2000, 16 Garfield Street, Charlottetown, PEI C1A 7N8

July 19, 2000

The Honorable James W. Ballem
Minister Responsible for Seniors
PO Box 2000
Charlottetown, PEI
C1A 7N8

Dear Mr. Ballem:

On behalf of the members of the Prince Edward Island Seniors Advisory Council, I am pleased to present our Second Annual Report to you.

This report provides a summary of activities of the council during its second year from July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Henry MacDonald

Heather Henry MacDonald, Chair
Seniors Advisory Council

Message from the Chair

During its second year, the PEI Seniors Advisory Council continued to learn about the policies, programs and services for senior citizens in Prince Edward Island. The council spent considerable time meeting with seniors in their communities to become more familiar with concerns.

Council members spent several volunteer hours attending meetings of the council and its subcommittees, reviewing reports and documents, and representing council at workshops, seminars and conferences. Council members were also active in their communities participating on many committees and in various organizations for the betterment of present and future generations. Council members participated in several Health Canada projects and some community initiatives. During the year, the council also received many requests to respond to national studies and reports and to represent the province at national meetings.

The council recognizes that our aging population will have profound implications for Prince Edward Island's communities, families, industry and marketplace. Changing demographics will challenge current polices, programs and services which are based on a population with a larger proportion of children and working-age adults. We will need to examine our structures and policies related to family care, labor force participation, retirement, health care, home care and long term care, as well as other public services such as transportation, housing and education.

The Seniors Advisory Council will continue to investigate these issues and make recommendations to assist government and communities in addressing these challenges. Members of the Seniors Advisory Council are dedicated to providing meaningful advice to government. The mandate of the council is to serve in an advisory capacity to government and provide a means of drawing upon the knowledge and experience of seniors.

I would like to thank members of the council for their dedication and commitment to improving the quality of life for present and future senior citizens of Prince Edward Island.

Heather Henry MacDonald

Heather Henry MacDonald, Chair
Seniors Advisory Council

Work of the Council

The council moved from having co-chairs to having an executive which includes a chair, past chair, vice chair and secretary. During the year, council had eight regular meetings and a meeting with Caucus. Council meetings included educational sessions concerning programs and services for seniors.

The Minister Responsible for Seniors, Honourable Mildred Dover, met with the co-chairs in July, and the chair in February. Minister Dover also spoke at the October meeting and briefly visited the March meeting. She encouraged the council to meet with Island seniors and bring their concerns to government.

The council celebrated the *Declaration of the Rights and Responsibilities of the Older Population* (see Appendix B). This Declaration was proclaimed by Premier Binns on *International Human Rights Day*, December 10, 1999.

Council developed a Members Handbook and held community consultations throughout the year. The council participated in several Health Canada projects and community initiatives. In addition, many requests were received to respond to national studies and reports, and to represent the province at national meetings.

The council followed up on the issues relating to the Drug Cost Assistance Plan and the issue surrounding vulnerable seniors being cared for in private homes. Additional issues under review include: housing, transportation, driving privileges and home care.

In support of intergenerational relationships, the council partnered with the Let Older Volunteers Educate (LOVE) Project to promote Intergenerational Week, May 29 to June 4. Premier Pat Binns declared the week and highlighted the BOAST (Bring Older Adults and Students Together) Project in Montague on May 29. Premier Binns, assisted students and volunteer seniors planting seedlings grown through the BOAST project.

The Seniors Advisory Council recognized June as Seniors month by:

- delivering an announcement at the Shifting Sands Conference in Charlottetown on May 31, encouraging groups to celebrate the month;
- participating in the Eleventh Annual West Prince Seniors Expo on June 6; and
- launching the new Seniors Web site on June 19, 2000.

Council Members

During the year, the council member representing the Southern Kings region resigned and was replaced by another representative from that region. The initial terms for council members were for two or three years. Upon completion of its second year, council has given six members whose terms have expired the opportunity to serve a second term. See *Appendix A* for a list of council members.

Members Handbook

The council have developed a Members Handbook. The handbook outlines the mandate, structure, operating procedures, policy guidelines and directives, publications and other relevant information regarding the Seniors Advisory Council. It provides up-to-date information which will assist members in fulfilling their role.

The handbook serves as a practical reference for all council members and will be updated as new procedures and guidelines are developed.

Seniors Web Site

The PEI Seniors Web site was launched June 19, 2000 by the Department of Health and Social Services and the Prince Edward Island Seniors Advisory Council and can be accessed through the provincial government web site at ***www.gov.pe.ca/seniors***.

The site was developed by the PEI Seniors Advisory Council in response to repeated requests by seniors to be able to access timely and coordinated information on services for seniors. The new site makes information on services and supports for seniors available through one easily accessible site. Since statistics show that more and more Island seniors are using the Internet, the new site is designed to make information on PEI government and community services easy for seniors and their families to access.

The Seniors Web site contains a range of information on health services and supports including: physician services, home care and mental health services. The site also provides information on services in Island communities such as churches, support groups and Meals on Wheels. Links are present to other sites of interest such as genealogy, gardening, weather and news sites. The Seniors Web site also links to other sites across the country which provide information on healthy aging.

The council appreciates the interest in and the work of government staff in this project.

Community Consultation

The Seniors Advisory Council organized its monthly meetings in various regions across the province to consult with seniors in local communities. Consultations were held in Wellington, Montague, Kingsboro and Mill River. A consultation scheduled for Charlottetown was canceled due to weather conditions. Council plans to continue to consult with seniors during the coming year.

The issues raised during community consultations were varied, but common issues include:

- lack of public transportation;
- the need for expanded home care services;
- increasing drug costs and/or drugs not covered by DCAP; and
- access to meals-on-wheels in rural areas.

a. First Community Consultation—Wellington

Representatives from Les francophones de l'âge d'or de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard made a presentation to the Seniors Advisory Council in Wellington. Issues specific to the Francophone community include:

- French language home care workers;
- French language services in hospitals and nursing homes;
- Acadian food in manors and hospitals; and
- ongoing funding for a coordinator to organize volunteer services for seniors.

Representatives from Les francophones de l'âge d'or de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard felt the Evangeline Region was well served by the Access PEI site and Acadian College in Wellington; however, they felt French speaking seniors in other areas of the province were not able to easily access services in French.

b. Second Community Consultation—Montague

Representatives from the Cardigan Victory Chimes and the Montague 50+ Club made presentations to the Seniors Advisory Council at a community consultation in Montague. Seniors expressed concerns about:

- waiting periods for doctor appointments;
- maintaining adequate hospital staff;
- costs of equipment and treatment supplies after hospital discharge;
- issues surrounding seniors caring for grandchildren;
- police protection for seniors who remain in their own home;
- support for seniors participating in 55+ Games; and
- meeting places for seniors groups.

c. Third Community Consultation—Kingsboro

Representatives from the Souris Silver Threads Club in Souris and the Seniors Neighbours Club in Kingsboro met with Council in April at the meeting in the Eastern Kings Community Center. In addition to issues common to all groups, they voiced concern about:

- sharp increases in insurance premiums for seniors;
- the cost of home maintenance for elderly seniors; and
- the need for more affordable housing options.

d. Fourth Community Consultation—Mill River

Guests at the May meeting at Mill River expressed personal stories. The issues brought forward in many of the stories were similar to issues expressed by seniors across Prince Edward Island.

One senior, retired after teaching for 37 years, cared for her only sister who passed away last year. Although this senior has severe arthritis and needs a great deal of assistance to remain in her own home, she still plays the organ at church and is a member of the Seniors Expo Committee. A home care nurse is presently treating her for a leg ulcer and neighbours do the laundry, bring in meals and assist with cleaning. This senior is fearful of the time when she will be dependent for all her care needs. She mentioned that she will be able to remain in her home providing the following services are available:

- home care services like nursing and homemaking;
- weekly century tub baths at the manor;
- physiotherapy and occupational therapy services (which are not now available);
- home adaptations and repair services;
- unpaid care and services - laundry, meals, cleaning, yard work, snow shoveling;
- recreational and social activities;
- car adaptations (i.e., swing seat for ease of entry/exit from her vehicle); and
- transportation when she can no longer drive her own car.

Another senior, who comes from a family of 15, feels part of the "sandwich generation" as she looks after her parents and her granddaughter. In addition to family responsibilities, she is active in a local Seniors Club and the West Prince Seniors Expo.

She spoke of her parents, who after 66 years of marriage, are now unhappily separated because of their care requirements. Her father, who has suffered

several strokes, is in a nursing home and her mother, who is blind, is being cared for in a private home. When her parents were no longer safe to remain in their own home alone, family members agonized over how their parents would be cared for. Family members were not in a position to move back home because of work and their own family commitments, and did not have homes suitably laid-out for providing care to their parents. Even though the family was willing to provide financial support, it was impossible to hire anyone to move into the parents home to provide in-home 24 hour care.

Her parents could have remained in their own home and enjoyed their time together if:

- there was a quality, monitored 24 hour, private, in-home care service;
- government manors would make provision to provide care for a couple, even though one may require a different level of care; and
- a range of supportive housing options were available.

It was noted that the province does have five Garden Suites. These are one bedroom units that are located on a host property, usually of a relative. When no longer required in one area they can be moved to the next area of need.

Educational Activities

During its second year, the PEI Seniors Advisory Council has continued to learn about the policies, programs and services for senior citizens in Prince Edward Island. As part of regular meetings, the council heard presentations on the following:

- changes to the Drug Cost Assistance Plan - Pat Crawford, Pharmacy Consultant, Health and Social Services;
- social and economic implications of an aging population - Honourable Mildred Dover, Minister Responsible for Seniors;
- strengths and challenges of PEI long term care - Dr. Zacharias, Provincial Geriatrician;
- Senior Friendly Community Project - Olive Bryanton, PEI Seniors Federation;
- Info PEI - Carol Mayne, PEI Department of Technology and Environment; and
- Association of Community Care Facilities - Dr. Lori Weeks and Reg. Chapman.

The council viewed the following videos:

- Care Canada - IYOP - Kosovo,
- Friendly Seniority - (with Don Harron),
- Improving Access to Health Information (VAC), and the
- War Amps Mature Drivers Program - No Left Turn.

Council members were invited to attend many workshops and conferences. During the year, the Chair attended the 4th Global Conference on Aging in Montreal. In addition one or more members of council attended meetings regarding:

- International Year of Older Persons,
- Premier's Millennium Awards Project,
- Queens Region Senior's Advisory Committee workshop on Elder Abuse,
- PEI 55+ Games,
- Shifting Sands project,
- Pain Management Workshop,
- Canadian Gerontology Conference,
- Strong Face of Age Project,
- 1st Canadian Intergenerational Conference,
- National Advisory Council on Aging,
- Veteran's Affairs Gerontological Advisory Council,
- Workshop - 2000 and Beyond: Priorities for the Health of Canadians, and
- Care and Support Options for Seniors and Caregivers Workshop.

Community Involvement

Council members attended workshops, seminars and conferences as well as participated in several community projects. The council has responded to national studies and reports and represented the province at national meetings.

The council participated in Island Focus, a weekly community outreach TV program which highlights the mandate and work of government services and community initiatives.

The council received requests to become involved with several projects including: Senior Friendly Community Project, 55+ Games, Active Living—Coalition for Older Adults, and Shifting Sands. Members try to accommodate these requests when possible, but cannot participate as fully as they would like due to time and budget restrictions.

Council members are very active in their communities and participate on many committees and in various organizations for the betterment of present and future generations. One member of the council is PEI's representative on the Senior's Commission to the federal government. Some members are actively involved with:

- Atlantic Seniors Health Promotion Committee,
- Let Older Volunteers Educate (LOVE),
- Bring Older Adults and Students Together (BOAST),
- Letter-mates (a pen-pal project between seniors and elementary students),
- Senior's Literacy Project,
- West Prince Caring Cupboard,

- Retired Teachers Association,
- West Prince Seniors Expo,
- Meals on Wheels,
- Royal Canadian Legions, and
- Retired Federal Superannuates

Conclusions

The Seniors Advisory Council recommends that an initiative be undertaken by government in partnership with the private and community sectors, to develop a long-term strategy on aging for Prince Edward Island, setting out goals and objectives for healthy, independent aging and measures to achieve these objectives.

It is very important for government and communities to plan now for the implications of an aging Prince Edward Island society and the resulting effect on policies, programs and services offered by government. Cost-effective supports to ensure the continued independence of Island seniors, their quality of life and social participation is possible through the development of inclusive, supportive communities and appropriate health and social service supports responsive to the needs of an aging population. The desire of seniors to 'age in place' in familiar surroundings with independence and dignity intact, will challenge community and volunteer resources, as well as family and friendship networks.

Prince Edward Island is relatively well placed to deal with aging in light of present fiscal policy given the elimination of the deficit and decreasing debt, and national programs already in place (Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Annual Income). A great deal of work has been done in the areas of home care support and long term care to meet the needs of the older population. Nevertheless, a Population Aging Strategy is needed to prepare our programs and services to meet the changing needs of an aging population.

During its second year of operation, the Seniors Advisory Council had a rewarding year. The Rights and Responsibilities of Older Persons were adopted, a new Seniors Web site was launched, community consultations were held and a Member's Handbook was developed. The Seniors Advisory Council continues to provide a valuable service to government by identifying issues and making recommendations to assist government and communities in addressing these challenges.

We are appreciative of the many people who shared their knowledge and experience with the council. We extend special thanks to Pat Malone, Seniors Liaison Coordinator, for her expert support and guidance, and to the Acute and Continuing Care Division of the PEI Department of Health and Social Services for their support of our work.

Appendix A

Seniors Advisory Council Members - 1999 - 2000

Heather Henry-MacDonald - Chair
Stratford

David Harper
Tignish

Gerarda Corcoran
Bloomfield

Fran Sark
Lennox Island

Antoine Richard
Mount Carmel

Henry Meek
Kensington

Eileen Trainer
Charlottetown

H. Bernice Bell
Charlottetown

Donald M. Thompson
Charlottetown

Lloyd MacInnis
Glen William

Malcolm Patterson
Montague

Gordon Robertson
Kingsboro

Appendix B

Declaration on The Rights And Responsibilities of Older Persons

Preamble - The Prince Edward Island Government,

Appreciating the tremendous diversity in the situation of older persons, not only among countries but within countries and between individuals, which requires a variety of policy responses,

Aware that in all nations, individuals are living to advanced age in greater number and in better health than ever before, and persuaded by the scientific research disproving many stereotypes about inevitable and irreversible declines with age,

Convinced that a world characterized by increasing numbers and proportions of older persons must provide opportunities for willing and capable older persons to participate and contribute to the ongoing activities of society,

Mindful that the strains on family life in both developed and developing nations requires support for caregivers of frail older persons,

Emphasizing that fundamental human rights do not diminish with age and believing that because of the marginalization and disabilities which old age may bring, older persons are at risk of losing their rights and being rejected by society unless these rights are clearly identified and respected,

Recognizing that without these rights, older persons cannot meet their desired responsibilities,

Bearing in mind the standards already set in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights, and the International Plan of Action on Aging, as well as the adoption of other declarations to assure the application of universal standards to particular groups.

Now proclaims the following rights of older persons which should be secured to them by national and international action so that they may be protected and enabled to make continuing contributions to society, as well as the responsibilities which they acknowledge:

Rights of Older Persons

Independence—Older persons have the right:

- to obtain adequate food, water, shelter, clothing and health care through the provision of income, family and community support and self-help;
- to work and to pursue other income-generating opportunities with no barriers based on age;
- to retire and participate in determining when and at what pace withdrawal from the labor force takes place;
- to access educational and training programs to enhance literacy, facilitate employment, and permit informed planning and decision-making;
- to live in environments that are safe and adaptable to personal preferences and changing capacities; and
- to reside at home for as long as possible.

Participation—Older persons have the right:

- to remain integrated and participate actively in society, including the process of development and the formulation and implementation of policies which directly affect their well-being;
- to share their knowledge, skills, values and life experience with younger generations;
- to seek and develop opportunities for service to the community and to serve as volunteers in positions appropriate to their interests and capabilities; and
- to form movements or associations of the elderly.

Care—Older persons have the right:

- to benefit from family support and care consistent with the well-being of the family;
- to obtain health care to help them maintain or regain the optimum level of physical, mental and emotional well-being and to prevent or delay the onset of illness;
- to access social and legal services to enhance capacity for autonomy and provide protection and care;
- to utilize appropriate levels of institutional care which provide protection, rehabilitation and social and mental stimulation in a humane and secure environment; and
- to exercise human rights and fundamental freedoms when residing in any shelter, care and treatment facility, including full respect for their dignity, beliefs, needs, and privacy and for the right to make decisions about their care and quality of life.

Self-Fulfillment—Older persons have the right:

- to pursue opportunities for the full development of their potential; and
- to access the educational, cultural, spiritual, and recreational resources of society.

Dignity—Older persons have the right:

- to be treated fairly regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, disability or other status, and to be valued independently of their economic contributions;
- to live in dignity and security and to be free of exploitation and physical or mental abuse; and
- to exercise personal autonomy in health care decision-making, including the right to die with dignity by assenting to or rejecting treatments designed solely to prolong life.

Responsibilities of Older Persons

Consistent with individual values and as long as health and personal circumstances permit, older persons should try:

- to remain active, capable, self-reliant and useful;
- to learn and apply sound principles of physical and mental health to their own lives;
- to take advantage of literacy training;
- to plan and prepare for old age and retirement.
- to update their knowledge and skills, as needed, to enhance their employability if labor force participation is desired;
- to be flexible, together with other family members, in adjusting to the demands of changing relationships;
- to share knowledge, skills, experience and values with younger generations.
- to participate in the civic life of their society;
- to seek and develop potential avenues of service to the community; and
- to make informed decisions about their health care and to make decisions about terminal care known to their physician and family.

DECLARATION

Rights and Responsibilities of Older Persons

HUMAN RIGHTS
DROITS DE LA PERSONNE

1999
towards a society for all ages
International Year of Older Persons 1999

WHEREAS in the month of September 1999, the ***Rights and Responsibilities of Older Persons*** was adopted by the International Federation on Aging; and

WHEREAS in Prince Edward Island, as in other countries around the world, individuals are living to advanced age in better health than ever before; and are willing and capable to participate and contribute to the ongoing activities of society; and

WHEREAS fundamental human rights do not diminish with age including the rights of participation, independence, care, dignity, and self fulfilment; and recognizing that without these rights, older persons cannot meet their desired responsibilities;

Therefore, as Minister Responsible for Seniors, I officially recognize the ***Rights and Responsibilities of Older Persons,*** to which they are entitled, so they may be protected and able to make continuing contributions to society.

Furthermore, I would encourage all Islanders to take time to reflect upon how their inclusion of older persons contributes to our international dedication to the principle of equity for all.

Mildred A. Dover

Honourable Mildred Dover
Minister Responsible for Seniors

Prince Edward Island
CANADA

Appendix C

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Intergenerational Week will strengthen the ties of family and friends and enhance communication among all generations regardless of age or station in life; and

WHEREAS, Intergenerational Week will promote activities to bridge the gap among all generations; and

WHEREAS, Intergenerational Week will bring about understanding that all generations are connected and will work together with a common goal to make each generation stronger and healthier; and

WHEREAS, it is the goal of Intergenerational Week to create a climate for harmonious intergenerational relationships, and ultimately create a norm in which the intergenerational spirit evoked during the annual celebration of the generations is maintained throughout the year;

Therefore I, Honourable Patrick G. Binns, Premier of Prince Edward Island, do hereby proclaim May 29 to June 4, 2000, as:

Intergenerational Week,
A Celebration of the Generations

All Island residents are invited to recognize and support intergenerational activities focusing on the similarities between the ages and the need to learn from each other.

PARVA SUB INGENTI

Honourable Patrick G. Binns
Premier of Prince Edward Island

May 29, 2000
Montague, PEI